



From the desk of
Representative Jim Moeller

Winter 2007



Dear Neighbor:

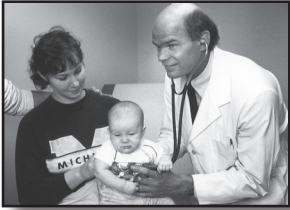
Thank you for the continuing honor of representing our communities in the state Legislature. I look forward to working with you, and to hearing what you think about issues before us.

I'm pleased to share this report on the legislative issues I am spending most of my time working on this session. You'll see that I want to cover a lot of bases this year. Health care for children, tax fairness for citizens *and* businesses, safety for vulnerable adults – these and many other subjects will receive a lot of attention the next several months.

A couple special notes: Please let me know if you'd prefer to review these newsletters on my Web site (<http://www.leg.wa.gov/house/moeller/>) – rather than receive them in the postal mail. Also, if you want to subscribe to my Weekly Update e-memo (a review of what's happening in Olympia), you can sign up by sending me an e-mail. Simply insert this message in the subject line: "Add me to your Weekly Update list."

Thanks again – and take care,

Jim Moeller
State Representative
49th Legislative District
693-0804 (my local phone number)



✓ **Health Care:**

Measure a society's heart by the way it answers the needs of its children



he children are our future.” You’ve heard that old saw a million times, right? The fact remains, though, that we won’t have much of a tomorrow if we shirk our basic responsibilities to kids today. **Sadly, one of the duties we’ve been dodging for years is seeing to it that young people have access to reliable, affordable health care.** (This is one of the issues that made me want to serve in the Legislature in the first place.)

Now, don’t get me wrong: I don’t want to get preachy. I don’t want to set off a political debate about whether or not “it takes a village.” **I just hope we can at least all agree that an unhealthy present for anyone means an awfully flimsy future for everyone.**

Our state in the past several years has made a commitment to ensure health care for all Washington kids by the year 2010. We have a considerable ways to go. Specifically, about 70,000 children remain uninsured for basic health care. Shockingly, about 50,000 of these youngsters live in families whose parents make as much as \$50,000 a year.

This session, we’ll review recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Commission on Health Care.

The commission is specifically urging that we identify currently uninsured kids in eligible families not presently enrolled in health-care programs for low-income children. We also need to simplify the process for obtaining children’s coverage. Further, we should emphasize and encourage increased immunization-rates, and well-child checkups to reduce emergency-room usage.



✓ **Tax Fairness:**

A sales-tax holiday would work for Washington citizens and businesses



hen it comes to our tax system, I firmly believe a sales-tax holiday would be a great step – especially for our border counties in southwestern Washington and the folks over in eastern Washington. I’m sponsoring legislation establishing this “holiday” here the second weekend in August. You don’t have to be a Wall Street economist to see that this proposal would recapture a large chunk of the millions of dollars in back-to-school-shopping revenue our stores lose to Oregon every year.

The sales-tax holiday would apply to clothing, shoes, school-supplies, textbooks, computers and other school-related items.

Frankly, this would be a modest but genuine and reliable tax break for “regular people” – not big corporations. These are the thousands of families doing the best they can at the start of every school year just to buy school supplies and still make ends meet.



✓ **Safety:**

*Too many vulnerable adults are
in dire need of protection from abuse*

All too many Washington adults live in crisis because of threats to their physical and emotional safety. I'm talking about elderly citizens and other men and women whose very well-being is at stake. This is obviously no way to live – and it's just as obvious to me that this is no way for us to let other people live. How many awful headlines will it take for us to put an end to their nightmare? Protection for vulnerable adults is another issue I've been working on since last year's legislative session.

It has been my pleasure to work with a group of dedicated folks in Clark County. The members of the Vulnerable Adult Task Force include advocates for senior citizens, social-service providers, and representatives from law enforcement and the prosecutor's office. We've been reviewing much-needed steps to help protect vulnerable adults in our community.

My legislation states that a person acting on behalf of a vulnerable adult can seek relief from abuse, neglect, abandonment, financial exploitation, or the threat of such activity by filing a petition in superior court for an order for protection. The courts would develop and prepare instructions required under the law, as well as a standard petition and order-for-protection form and a handbook on the protection-order process.



✓ **Furthermore:**

*Other proposals run the rainbow
from firearm safety to child support*

One of the other bills I'm sponsoring this session involves firearms-safety for children. The Child Safety Act would bring a charge of reckless endangerment against a gun-owner if the gun-owner leaves a loaded firearm where a child would likely gain access to the weapon. Then if the child does in fact use the weapon to injure either himself or herself or another person – the gun-owner would be held accountable. (This is one of the proposals I have continued to pursue after introducing it in an earlier legislative session.)

Once and for all, we need to address the senseless deaths of children caused by guns that haven't been safely and securely stored by adults. This bill simply makes the adults legally responsible for their own carelessness.

Also in the 2007 Legislature, I am working for policies that:

- Provide notification to parents or guardians when a juvenile in their charge is taken into custody.
- Expand the definition of "at-risk youth" to include a young person who might have a substance-abuse problem or a mental-health problem.

- Require people who work in the building trades to display their licenses and certificates when they're on the job.
- Ask the Washington State Investment Board to move our state away from investing in businesses that are actively involved in Sudan, a nation whose citizens are facing unspeakable atrocities.
- Revise state law to make it less cumbersome for non-Washington residents to participate in hunting and shooting competitions here as long as the visitors pass FBI background checks.
- Provide electronic-filing of information by lobbyists so these details are immediately available to the public.
- Establish work-groups to periodically review our state's child-support schedule.



Check out this Web site for some energy-saving incentives

Here's a Web site that features a very good database of state, local, utility and federal incentives for renewable energy and energy efficiency. You'll find programs, policies, regulations, tax incentives, loans, grants, and other details listed state-by-state. Production incentives, sales-tax exemptions, utility-grant, loan and rebate programs, and alternative-fuel and vehicle incentives are just a few of the issues covered in this Web site:
<http://www.dsireusa.org/>.

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